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## COMX 312.80: Forensics

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# COMX 312 Forensics (Honors)

## Fall 2018

Instructors: Joel Iverson and Sabrina Singh

Office: LA 359 and 339

Office Hours: 8:30-10:30 Thursdays and by appointment for Joel. Sabrina:

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### Course Catalog Description:

(R-12) Offered every term. Preparation and participation in competitive speech and debate. The team travels to regional competitions and hosts on-campus and intramural debates and speaking events. Up to 6 credits may apply toward a major or minor in communication studies.

### Objectives:

By the end of the semester, you should:

- Be versed in the different theories and styles of debate
- Have a working knowledge of debate techniques and strategies
- Understand the different elements of persuasion and audience adaptation
- Know how to properly research and prepare debate cases
- Be able to think critically

### Texts:

Readings will be provided for the class as needed, and some free PDFs on the Moodle Page.

### Assignments:

This is a unique class because it is about debating, so your grade will be about the preparation and performance of the debates of that event.

All of these assignments will be explained in more detail and if you have any questions feel free to ask about them and the grading elements for them.

### Grading:

Grades will be determined using the following scale:

A—100-90% B—89-80% C—79-70% D—69-60% E/F—0-59%

For those taking on the Pass/Fail scale a grade of 60% and higher is a pass and less than 60% is fail.

### Make-up Examinations and assignments:

There are no makeups without prior approval. No make-up tests will be given unless the absence was unavoidable or otherwise justified, the student and instructor will coordinate for a make-up examination to be taken as soon as possible. A properly documented medical reason for missing an assignment is an example of a legitimate reason for a makeup. Airline tickets for a vacation or going home early do not constitute a legitimate reason for a makeup exam and no makeup will be offered.

### Grading Philosophy:

It is my philosophy that for grades to be meaningful a C should be average and high grades must be reserved for exceptional work. Cs (not Bs or As) will be given for work that is acceptable and of average college level quality. The grade of C, therefore, **does not indicate any shortcoming** and **may** be the most common grade given. This means that you have met the basic requirements of the speech/assignment, but there is more that could be done to make the speech/assignment better. For example, if a paper requires you to write 8 pages and use 10 different sources, that does not mean that you would receive an A for that work, only that you have met the basic requirements. Remember, this does not mean that everyone would or should get a C in the course, this only is designed to explain my philosophy about grades.

Grading will be done as follows:

**C:** Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. This score **does not indicate any shortcoming**. All the work was done adequately and completely, and the work showed basic understanding and mastery of the course material.

**B:** Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. Not only were all the basic expectations met, it exceeded minimum expected quality levels. This work probably showed one or more of the following characteristics: excellent understanding of the class material, excellent application of theory to practice, unusual thoroughness in thought and preparation.

**A:** Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. This work is superior in every respect, and represents the highest level of achievement. Its quality is so good that it would be unreasonable to ask a college student to improve upon it.

**D:** Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet course requirements. While there was merit to what was done, there were also deficiencies that meant the work did not fully meet the minimal expectations.

**E/F:** Represents performance that fails to meet the course requirements and is unworthy of credit. This work shows serious deficiencies in regard to the expectations for the assignment.

Academic Misconduct:

As a student at the University of Montana, you must practice academic honesty and need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. It is available to download at:

**[http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)**

As the code explains, academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, and deliberate interference with the work of others. It is the intellectual equivalent of fraud—a crime against the codes of the academy. As an academic crime, plagiarism merits academic punishment, subject to an academic penalty by the instructor. The bottom line is, don't do it.

### Students with Disabilities:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

### Grievances (Complaints):

There is a specific process for raising grievances that is defined in the Student Conduct Code. Following this process is necessary for insuring that the rights of all parties to a grievance are respected. In a nutshell, the process simply directs you to address concerns with your instructor first and then proceed up the university hierarchy.

#### Student Consent and Instructor Elasticity:

The instructor stipulates that a student's receipt of this syllabus shall act as a contract between the instructor and the student. Receipt of this syllabus presupposes that a student has read and understands the policies contained herein. The instructor reserves the right to amend course assignments, assignment weights, readings and non-administrative items contained in this syllabus.

#### Travel:

Travel is not a requirement for this course but it is encouraged. Your grade will not be impacted in any way if you do not travel however. This semester has its own uncertainties with the transition to a new coach/instructor. We will offer in-class and on-campus debates as a viable option.

We will not do all of these tournaments but depending on the focus that we wish to do certain tournaments will have a higher level of importance for us.

Possible Traveling tournaments this does not include travel days.

Sept 21-22 NW Wyoming

Oct 26 IPDS & IE at Whitworth, Spokane WA;

Nov 16- Linfield;

Nov 30 Puget Sound; Parli only

Online IPDA tournaments – these exist, but they are not in our hands as of yet. More to come.

Campus Events – These are up for discussion:

Rural Institute would like to host a debate on disability issues.

Campus Tournament – should we do one? We think so.

Class Schedule to follow once we see where we are at in the debate world.